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578 626 A man who believes himself to be the butt of an *indirecta* will also usually leave the group, but sometimes the statements are so obvious and crude that he interprets them as a challenge to fight. However, rarely does a fight occur as a result of such a situation; rather, the insulted person waits for an opportunity to harm the other secretly, and he, in turn, spends many an uneasy hour not knowing what to expect.

Gossip is unrelenting and harsh in Tepoztlán, especially when directed against an individual or family with whom there is a grievance. Facts about people are unconsciously or maliciously distorted, and gossip sometimes leads to tragedy. Relatives and neighbors are quick to believe the worst, and motives are always under question. A woman who puts on her best dress and takes a bus to Cuernavaca is said to be going to meet a lover. A girl who leaves town to work or study is going "to throw away a baby." A man who has gained weight and wears better clothing than before, for no known reason, must have been stealing. A wife who dominates her husband must have bewitched him.

There is a readiness to inform on others and to carry complaints to the head of the family. Neighbors and relatives are quick to let parents know that their daughter has been seen talking or walking with a boy, or that their child has been throwing stones. Claims for even slight damages are readily made. For example, a widow selling squash in the market place made a row and demanded payment when someone's two-year-old son knocked over a squash and caused the stem to fall off.

[156] Successful persons are popular targets of criticism, envy, and malicious gossip. A new calf or cow may come home with a deep slash from someone's machete. Some unknown enemy may stone another's dog or drive away his chickens or pigs.

[609] Tourists, government representatives, or other outsiders, whether from another country, state, or village, are favorite targets for private ridicule which is often carping and picayune. Their way of dress, their speech, their manners are all fair game, and any mishap they suffer or error they make gives special delight. Most

[522] of the humor in jokes, stories, and conversation is in the form of ridicule of some

[535] person or group. At the Carnaval it is the custom for some of the masked dancers to caricature and criticize public figures, much to the glee of the villagers.

[793] Even the priest is not above criticism. At one period in the history of the village there was so much criticism of successive priests sent in from the outside that the archbishop decided to punish the village by threatening to withhold a priest for seven years. However, a Tepoztecan who had studied for the priesthood agreed to take the job and retained it successfully for many years. Nicknames are common

[551] and also tend to expose personal weaknesses, sometimes to an embarrassing degree. In addition to personal nicknames, there are also nicknames for each of the barrios and villages within the municipio.

578 754 [156] [152] The most feared, but perhaps least common, form of indirect aggression is sorcery. Fear of sorcery is not omnipresent. It occurs only when a person has reason to expect it as the result of having injured or insulted another or of having become wealthy or otherwise outstanding. Young men and women are also apt to

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876 "bad" boys. Other punishments are keeping a child in during the recreation hour; reporting bad behavior to the parents; giving out tasks, such as sweeping the classroom or yard, working in the garden, or writing an assigned sentence one hundred times. One girl was locked up in the henhouse for hitting other children. Parents generally approve of physical punishment in the school, and some think the school is now too lenient. In the past, it was common practice for parents who could not control their children at home to ask the teacher to discipline them. Children who are punished in school rarely tell their parents about it for fear that they will be punished a second time at home. Causes for punishment in school are inattentiveness, not knowing the lesson, fighting, and disobedience.

593 861 Other methods are also used to instill fear in the child. It is common for parents, particularly mothers, to threaten to desert their children, playing on the children's fear of becoming orphans. One mother said that she can get obedience from her children by telling them that she will stop eating and die so that they will have to live with a cruel stepmother. Children are told that if they are naughty they will be carried off by a stranger who will make soap out of them. Any passer-by, and recently the *gringo,* is used to frighten children in this way. In Tepoztlán, where children have occasion to see many tourists and outsiders coming and going, the fear of strangers has worn off, but in the nearby smaller villages children run to hide when an unfamiliar person appears in the streets.

[609] [184]

593 861 Many mothers and grandmothers tell children stories of owls and coyotes coming out at night to eat bad children and of bats and opossums that drink blood. Children who lie or disobey are told that they will turn into devils and burn in hell. They are told that badness is always punished in some unexpected way, such as being bitten by a mad dog, and that goodness is rewarded with good luck.

538 [825]

[152] The sound of a child crying appears to be a particular source of irritation in adults, especially in men, and children are frequently frightened into silence by threats of punishment. The story of Cahuasohuanton, a spirit who listens outside the walls of the house and imitates the child crying, is told to frighten crying children into silence. The story, translated from the Náhuatl, goes as follows:

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[773] Once it happened that a child was crying a great deal, and his parents told him to lie down and go to sleep. He did not want to and sat near the hearth crying. His parents kept telling him to stop and then they fell asleep. After a while they awoke and heard a voice saying, "Cahuasohuanton yo ni concua," or "Cahuasohuanton has eaten him." The parents stood up and lighted a candle and there, near the hearth they saw the child dead, with his abdomen torn open and his intestines out and they knew that Cahuasohuanton had been there.

[776] Cahuasohuanton is a very fear-inspiring figure and children invariably cease crying when told that he is coming.

593 861 Frightening children is sometimes done for the amusement of adults. One informant remembered being very frightened as a child when his favorite uncle, after having told some ghost stories, suddenly told the child to run because a ghost was

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chasing him. The boy ran terrified and screaming. In his haste he tripped over a stone and fell, causing much laughter among the grownups. Another boy of two is often deliberately frightened by his mother and relatives with worms, which make him scream in terror. 593 861 522

Lying and deception play an important part in parent-child relationships. Deception is used by parents and other adults as a technique in controlling children, and Tepoztecans would be at a loss without it in rearing their children. Mothers particularly tend to make and break promises easily and to trick their children into doing things. The use of little lies is so common as to be taken for granted, and children early become accustomed to it. The importance of deception in the relations between parents and children cannot be overemphasized, particularly in its effect upon the development of the character of Tepoztecans. 577 593 861

Deception of the parents on the part of Tepoztecan children becomes habitual at an early age. Lying is encouraged by the need to escape punishment, and punishable situations occur almost daily. Outright disobedience, which occurs often in the absence of the parents, must be covered up, as well as unavoidable but punishable acts, such as accidental losing or damaging of property or hurting a younger sibling. Children who are restricted as to when, where, and with whom they may play will lie to get more freedom. There is, of course, much deception concerning *novios* or sweethearts. [857]

Parents view a child's lie primarily as a means of escaping difficult situations. There is little evidence of any moral indignation on their part, however. In punishing a child, the parents do not punish the lie as much as the misdeed the lie was meant to cover up. The child who lies is also viewed as an insubordinate child, and as such is resented by parents. Although children experience embarrassment when caught in a lie, there seems to be little guilt involved or shame in recounting the event to a third party.

The most important effect of the frequent use of deception is to cause mutual distrust between parents and children. Parents show a general distrust of their children and sometimes punish them for acts they deny having done, on the assumption that the children are lying. Much of parental behavior is rooted in the belief that a child tends to do wrong when he is not under the surveillance of an adult. Although fear is relied upon to control behavior, it is a form of remote control and as such is not entirely trustworthy. 593 861

Children's distrust of their parents is manifested primarily by withdrawal from the parents. Children generally do not confide private thoughts to their parents and gradually stop coming to them to seek information. The tendency of adults to give absurd or teasing answers further causes children to avoid asking questions. Questions on the part of children are generally not encouraged by parents and are frequently forbidden and punished. This is especially true of questions concerning sex and the body. The role of the parents in "keeping the eyes of the children closed" requires much use of deception, and children quickly learn not to ask questions about such matters nor to expect straightforward answers. [864]

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death, his brother will step in and claim a portion of the inheritance from the widow, especially when her children are still small.

IN-LAWS

Because of the predominance of patrilocal residence, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship is the most important of all in-law relations. When the young bride goes to live with her husband's family, she is expected to take the role of a grown daughter, addressing her husband's parents as mother and father and giving them the same respect and obedience she owes her own mother and father. Her work is assigned by the mother-in-law and generally consists of the most burdensome tasks, such as grinding corn, making tortillas, and washing and ironing the clothing of the entire family. In the past, when girls married at twelve or thirteen and were unskilled, it was the duty of the mother-in-law to teach them the work.

It is the obligation of the mother-in-law to chaperone her daughter-in-law and to see that she remains a faithful wife. To this end the daughter-in-law is expected to remain within the house most of the time and not to go out alone. There are many jokes told which depict the mother-in-law as the "policeman." When the daughter-in-law gives birth to a child, the mother-in-law has the major responsibility of caring for both of them; the quality of this care often depends upon whether or not the mother-in-law approves of her daughter-in-law. In cases in which the mother-in-law disapproves of the marriage, because the couple eloped or because the girl was pregnant before the marriage, or because she had a bad reputation, the young wives may be grossly neglected during and after childbirth.

Although many mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law manage to get along fairly well, the relationship is obviously a "charged" one and is generally recognized as such by Tepoztecans. Both women tend to approach their new relationship with apprehension. The young wife fears that she may not be able to please her mother-in-law, that too much work will be demanded of her, that she will feel like an outsider in a strange house. Many girls have grown up with the idea, learned from their mothers and other married women, that the daughter-in-law is merely the "slave" of the mother-in-law and suffers much at her hands. The mother-in-law, on the other hand, fears that her new daughter-in-law will be lazy and just another mouth to feed. If the girl comes from a better-to-do family, she may look down upon the way of life in her husband's home and cause uneasiness. It is for this reason that when marriages are arranged, the boy's parents seek a poor girl who will not be demanding or afraid to work.

In many cases the fears are justified and much quarreling occurs. The mother-in-law expects the younger woman to work as hard, if not harder, than she herself works. In fact, many women shift almost the entire burden of the household upon the daughter-in-law, so that they may take up business activity outside the home. The daughter-in-law, who may be seventeen or eighteen years of age, has been working hard from the age of thirteen in her own home under the instruction of

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Fig. 61. Courtship at the fountain.

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kissing the saints and kissing the priest's hands. One girl, when asked whether she ever kissed her *novio*, said, "What, is he a saint that I should kiss him?" Sexual relations between *novios* occurs frequently but not, as believed by parents, inevitably. Among young people who are *novios* for the first time, sexual relations may not occur until after one or even two years, or the pair may eventually separate over the question. Among more mature *novios*, platonic relations are a rarity. Ideally, both the boy and the girl are expected to be virgins at marriage, but it is safe to say that most boys and some girls have sexual relations before marriage.

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Young boys and girls often seek out older companions to learn from them the art of courtship. Girls at school and in the Juventud Católica discuss their *novios*, read each others' love letters, tell of experiences, and even tell off-color jokes and stories. Boys entering their teens loiter among older boys at every opportunity. The following excerpt from the story of one of our informants (now age forty) is a typical experience:

> When I was about fourteen, I managed to join up with some boys of eighteen and twenty. They began to say, "How many *novias* have you?" I answered, "None." "How stupid! Haven't you noticed the girl nearby who likes you?" They began to teach me how to speak to *novias*.
>
> Once a girl of about seventeen who lived near my house said to me, "I see you go out a

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They are made of heavy satin and velvet and trimmings of glass beads, tiny mirrors, sequins, and gold fringe. Some men go to distant cities to purchase the finest materials. The huge hats are also more elaborate, and many are lighted by electric light bulbs placed in the brim and worked by concealed batteries. The cost of a complete *chinelo* outfit was between 100 and 300 pesos in 1944. By 1947, the cost had risen to over 600 pesos. An interesting aspect of the Carnaval is that the masked participants frequently ridicule and caricature popular figures in the village, much to their discomfiture.

Fiesta of Ash Wednesday, celebrated in the parish church: Initiates Lent and brings with it obligations to fast, pray, light candles at the altar, pay *limosnas*, etc. Most Tepoztecans go to church to "take the ash." They believe that the cross made on their foreheads by the priest protects them against sorcery and evil acts of enemies. This belief is strengthened by the fact that the ashes used are those from the burning of old images of holy figures. It is customary for Tepoztecans to bring old images to the sexton to be burned. When Lent begins, the images in the central church and in the chapels are ceremonially covered with purple cloths by men who have inherited the honor from their fathers.

Fiesta of First Friday of Lent, celebrated in Chalma and Jiutepec: Two *mayordomos* in Tepoztlán organize pilgrimages to these holy centers. Each *mayordomo* has a banner with images of the Santo Señor de Chalma and the Santo Cristo of Jiutepec. The pilgrimage to Chalma includes the *pastores*, children who will sing to the image. The group going to Jiutepec includes dancers.

Fiesta of Second Friday of Lent, celebrated in Cuautla: Only a few Tepoztecans attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of Third Friday of Lent, celebrated in Tepalzingo: Because of the fair held at Tepalzingo, many Tepoztecans go, particularly those who wish to buy or sell. *Curanderos* go to purchase herbs from other localities and to sell Tepoztecan herbs; the ropemakers of San Sebastián go to sell ropes. Local merchants go to buy *rebozos*, painted gourds, and curiosities.

Fiesta of Fourth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Tlayacapan: In homage of the *Virgen de Tránsito*. According to Tepoztecan legend, this image once belonged to Tepoztlán, but in 1770 it was taken to Tlayacapan to be repainted. On the way back the men who carried it became tired and set it down. When they were ready to go on they found the image had become too heavy to lift. This was interpreted to mean that the image wished a temple to be built for her there, and that is why she remained in Tlayacapan. It is believed that the image promised Tepoztlán water so long as Tepoztecans made pilgrimages to Tlayacapan. Thus, it is the custom of many Tepoztecan families to attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of the Sunday after Fourth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Ocotitlán: Only those with *compadres* or friends in Ocotitlán attend this fiesta.

Fiesta of Fifth Friday of Lent, celebrated in Mazatepec and Totolapan: Both towns have important fairs on this occasion. Pilgrimages to Totolapan are organized by the *mayordomía* of Gabriel Mariaca, and to Mazatepec by the *mayordomía* of the barrio of Santa Cruz. Those who go generally take many flowers to sell, especially the *yoloxochiti* (heart flower), and buy in return *petates*, *rebozos*, dried squash gourds, tamarind, and several types of dried seed.

March 19. *Fiesta of San José*, celebrated in Santa Cruz: The large image of San José is housed in the barrio chapel along with other saints. Since the devotees of this image have been steadily increasing, there is talk of building a separate chapel for the image.